

Opinion

MUSKOKA MOSAIC

Introducing Mark Lupton

BY PAULA BOON

Many people turn their thoughts to maple syrup at this time of year. Others, like Mark Lupton, think about it all the time.

The owner of Mark's Muskoka Maple has been in the business since 1976, and his family's history with syrup-making goes back much further.

"My Grandma Mary Lupton's family had a sugar bush on West Point Sands Road, where a First Nations band had a sugaring-off place," Lupton says. "She helped them make syrup there."

His uncle Gus Holinshead introduced him to the family tradition on the family's century farm on Brown's Road. "He's the one who got me intrigued," says Lupton, poring over old photos of kettles hanging from poles over open fires.

"When I was a teenager," he says, "I asked my father if he was going to log the family's entire sugar bush on Britannia Road, and he said, 'Oh, I guess we could keep the back half for you.'"

Because of this, some of Lupton's trees are approaching three feet in diameter. "Those are the ones my grandfather once tapped," he says.

"It's a real connection to my past."

When Lupton decided to pursue maple syrup-making as a business, his brother, uncle Don Lupton and father helped him build a sugar camp and were involved in the operation. Eventually, he continued on his own.

In the early 80s his business was revolutionized when a man named Ian MacLaughlin advertised in the newspaper about new ways of doing things, such as using piping to collect sap instead of buckets hung from individual taps. MacLaughlin also encouraged Lupton to join the Ontario Maple Producers' Association. With his new knowledge and methods, Lupton was soon winning prizes at the Royal Winter Fair.

Even after all this time in the industry, Lupton is constantly experimenting and learning.

"I'm a strong advocate of research," he says. "The industry has made great strides since the 80s."

Lupton says that anyone who wants to be a maple syrup producer needs to wear many different hats: forester, plumber, fireman, cook and salesperson.

When the sap is running, Lupton goes for weeks with very little sleep boiling sap, repair-

ing pipe leaks and pumps and cleaning pans, packaging syrups, giving tours and even hosting a taffy party for friends and neighbours.

But the rest of the year he is just as busy. Each winter Lupton prepares all the wood he will need for the season's boiling – about 50 face cords. He also installs new piping and keeps an eye out for damage from animals who like to chew it, moose who run through it and increasingly common wind storms.

In early spring, Lupton taps the trees. "Timing is important," he says. "It takes me about 12 days to drill the 3,000 tap holes. You can't do it too soon or the taphole will take longer to heal, but if you wait too long you risk missing the beginning of the run."

After collecting all the sap and making the season's syrup, there's a two-week window in which all the piping and other equipment must be completely disinfected.

"Cleaning is a big thing," Lupton says. "If the sour sap isn't cleaned out, it turns into a hard plaque and your piping becomes useless."

Finally, the spring gives way to a busy summer of selling products at five Muskoka farmers' markets.

There is always work to be done, and a maple syrup producer never knows whether it will be a good year. As Lupton says, "To make it commercially you have to be hardy, to take a lot of licks, make a big investment and be patient. It's a huge commitment, and sometimes it's exhausting."

So why does he do it?

He says, "Wood smoke and maple steam; the first golden sweet flavor of pure maple syrup big as all outdoors; the taste of spring is worth it all."

Is there someone you'd like to see profiled in this space? Please call Paula at 789-5541 or e-mail pboon@metrolandnorthmedia.com.



LETTERS

Global warming requires action

Re: "Is global cooling an inconvenient fact?" letter to the editor, Huntsville Forester, March 12.

In his letter to the editor, Mr. Grainger states his opinion that we're now in a period of global cooling and asks why there is a general suppression by environmentalists and the media of inconvenient facts that support this.

He says that in one year the average global temperature has cooled approximately one degree. There were indeed changes made to data measuring global warming in the United States but, when these changes were applied to the whole globe, the effect on global temperatures was in the order of one-thousandths of a degree. The years from 2000 to 2007 are all among the warmest on record. Even without these inconvenient facts, how Mr. Grainger, do you explain Arctic sea ice melting at a rate far ahead of computer predictions? Earlier indications had been for an ice-free Arctic by 2040 but last year's melt has led one of the Arctic's leading scientists to revise this back to the summer of 2013. Why are glaciers and ice sheets across the globe also melting at an increasing rate? The World Glacier Monitoring Service notes that 2006 saw the biggest net loss of ice from glaciers (with 2007 figures not yet available).

The melt in Greenland started in 1979 and has been accelerating since, with the decade to 2006 doubling the rate of melt of the previous decade. Why is permafrost melting causing infrastructure losses throughout the polar regions? How do you explain these observable, albeit to you, inconvenient truths?

Could it be that the warming trend may be held in check, in part at least, by the energy used to melt these vast expanses of ice? Scientists are looking at other causes for this (including the part played by aerosols). It must be kept in mind that Mother

Nature is a truly complicated woman with many of her reasons for acting as she does far from clear.

You state that man-made global carbon dioxide emissions are less than one half of one percent (and ask what government is doing to reduce non-man-made carbon dioxide). How do you explain, since the industrial revolution, an increase from 280 ppm to our present 385 ppm, in the absence of natural causes such as extensive volcanic activity? In fact, data from ice cores show our present level to be higher than at any time during the last 650,000 years, with other evidence pointing to highs last attained 60,000 million years ago.

If you'd stated your objections to the lack of government action to reduce non-carbon dioxide human-caused forcings of other greenhouse gases (such as methane), you might have received some support from me.

Lastly, you cite as an example of an inconvenient fact, the record-setting snowy cold winter across Muskoka, Ontario and North America this year. On the next page to your letter, Dave Phillips, senior climatologist with Environment Canada, is quoted by Carlye Malchuk as saying that Muskoka has been warmer than normal this year. You're correct in noting excessive (and record-setting) snow accumulations. I doubt that science would let you blame this on global cooling.

Please look further into the observable data available, Mr. Grainger. Global warming is real and our responses to it must be urgent. In a recent draft paper co-authored by eight others, James Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, states that humans need to reverse course on emissions rapidly to avoid a centuries-long slide to conditions profoundly different from those that saw the rise and spread of modern civilization.

Mary McCulley
Huntsville

Not all women could celebrate March 8

On Saturday, March 8 I had the privilege of participating in the celebration on International Women's Day at the Algonquin Theatre. This community is blessed with some amazing women and many gathered to sing, dance and perform for an audience who braved the bad weather to attend.

Meg Jordan was the inspiration and the motivating force behind *Aphrodite and Friends* and everyone who was involved felt very blessed. We are very fortunate to live in a town with such a beautiful and well functioning theatre and a community who supports it.

I would like to express my thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate the day, including Christine Thornborrow of Sugarbeads who lent to the circle dancers some sparkle for their costumes and to Lorraine and Kim at Motivations and

Trinity Hall for the use of their space for our dance rehearsals.

Unfortunately not everyone had the opportunity to celebrate the day. A group of women in the Middle-East had planned to simple walk down the street together in a sense of support and solidarity but they had to cancel their walk because of death threats.

We have a long way to go for the women of the world to all feel safe and secure during this international day of peace. Ultimately when women and men walk together in the world in harmony we will find world peace. My hope is that next year on March 8 those women will be able to walk safely down the street.

Peggy Peterson
Huntsville

Condemnation of film wasn't fair: Reel Alternatives patron

It is unfortunate that Ches and Betty Fulton did not enjoy *Death at a Funeral*, but to condemn the movie as "common trash" and "not in keeping with what is expected in Huntsville" is, I believe, unfair.

Will they now describe *Horton Hears A Who* as a movie based on a book by an atheist, a book which subtly mocks McCarthyism?

I check reviews before I see a movie, and *Death at a Funeral* (rated 7.3 out of 10 on average by more than 11,000 voters) was described in one review I read as "laugh out loud brilliant British comedy. . . dark humour."

Another review called it "a real gem of a comedy. . . a must see. Great performances, hilarious storyline developments, and several unforgettable moments make this Brit pic one of the funniest movies. . . in a long time!"

The last review I read described the movie as "Monty Pythonesque" (I prefer Alec Guinness comedies).

Reel Alternatives has offered me alternatives to such "action packed thrillers" as *10,000 BC*, *Independence Day*, *The Day After Tomorrow*, *Vantage Point*, *Iron Man* and dozens of other shoot-em-up, blow-em-up films, which seem to be the only films the Capitol Theatre screens in its regular showings.

Thanks to Reel Alternatives I have been able to see many Oscar-nominated films such as *La Vie En Rose*, films which do not draw a mass audience, films which I would otherwise have to travel to Orillia, Barrie, or Toronto to see. Thank you, Rob and Karen.

Joy Salmon Moon
Huntsville

Things only getting worse for landlords in this province

The landlords of this province are having a very hard time trying to provide reasonable housing for their tenants. The main problem is the Landlord and Tenant Board, which is very poorly named, because it is so heavily loaded in favour of the tenants, it should be called, the Tenant's Board, because of the assistance they get in avoiding paying rent and eviction.

This is widely recognized by landlords, lawyers, police and any other authority involved, even the courts. The landlords of this province sure would be much happier if the findings of this board were equal for both parties involved. The tenants are given free council as to how to avoid paying rent. The 14-day notice (N4) that has to be given to start the process is evidence of much of the problem. It is a joke and tenants smile when receiving it.

I am told by people moving from Alberta that it is not taken lightly there and means what it says. We are told that at the end of the 14 days, if the rent is not paid in full the authorities see that they are removed. Here that is when the process starts to punish the wrong parties. The landlord has to pay \$150 to get a hearing date that could be a month further away. The landlord is not the problem, it is the tenant, and it is all caused by the tenant, so why should the landlord be punished this way?

In 1996 there was a meeting called in Huntsville to address some of these problems that

did get a lot of attention. Early in February of this year there was a letter sent to our member of parliament and also a letter forwarded by Mr. Miller to the Minister of Housing addressing some of the problems caused by what seems to be poor legislation on this government's part. The legislation that is now being used came into effect early in 1997 and is worse than it was before in this regard. The horror stories told by the landlords we talked to are all of similar content, some much worse than others. We hear of bad landlords, but there are more bad tenants causing them to take action.

At the hearings there are duty councillors available to assist the tenant in avoiding rental payments. One, we are told, was advised that if they were still in the apartment they could not be sued for arrears of rent. This is what we landlords have to deal with.

Part II, Item 10 of the current legislation reads as follows: "In selecting prospective tenants, landlords may use, in the manner prescribed in the regulations made under the Human Rights Code, income information, credit checks, credit references, rental history, guarantees or other similar business practices as prescribed in those regulations."

There is a list of bad tenants that landlords can use and we are sure more names will be added as they cause this action to be made.

Vic Cormack
Huntsville



HEALTHCARE HEROES



Spring Gala

April 19th, 2008

The annual dinner/dance at Deerhurst Resort sponsored by Philips with proceeds to Huntsville District Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Last year's volunteer of the year winners, Dino & Bessie Georges would like to see you at this year's Spring Gala. Enjoy the dinner provided by Deerhurst, the entertainment by Big Sweet Lou and Muskoka Touring Co. and a chance to win chocolate diamonds.

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